

CIVIL AIR PATROL



CADET PROTECTION POLICY AND PROGRAM FOR PARENTS AND LEADERS



Dear Parents and Cadet Program Leaders:

The Civil Air Patrol (CAP) has “zero tolerance” for all forms of child abuse and drug abuse within our program. The protection of CAP cadets is our highest priority and we have taken steps to do our best to eliminate both child abuse and drug abuse from all CAP activities. This pamphlet reviews these measures and is based on the cadet protection policy described in CAP Manual 50-16, *CAP Cadet Training Program*, Chapter 1, Section B.

Unfortunately, there are no guaranteed methods for preventing child sexual abuse. Individuals who sexually abuse children are almost impossible for any youth organization to recognize before a molestation occurs. CAP conducts FBI criminal history record checks on every CAP senior member in our best effort to screen any individuals with past offenses. We also require senior members to participate in our Cadet Protection Training Program. These and other measures we have instituted serve to protect your son or daughter from abuse while involved in official CAP sponsored activities. ***However, we cannot accept responsibility for the protection of cadets when they are involved in non-CAP activities, even if others involved with them may be other CAP cadets or senior members.***

We strongly recommend that you read this pamphlet thoroughly and carefully. In it you will find:

- Highlights of CAP cadet protection policies.
- Parental roles and responsibilities.
- Facts about sexual abuse and drug abuse.
- Tips for opening and maintaining communications with adolescents.

Our goal in providing this pamphlet to you is to enlist your help in protecting your children from both child abuse and drug abuse. Professionals who work in these fields are unanimous in stressing the importance of adults—especially parents—in the protection process.

Perhaps the most important role for adults is opening and maintaining communications with young people. Youths need to know that if they are confronted with major challenges such as being sexually abused that their parents and other trusted adults will be supportive. By offering you this pamphlet, we hope that you will find information and sufficient encouragement to take time to talk with your children about child abuse and drug abuse. We urge you to let your sons and daughters know that whatever problems they face, you are prepared to face those problems with them.

Any comments you have concerning this booklet should be forwarded to National Headquarters:

HQ CAP/ETS
105 South Hansell Street
Maxwell AFB AL 36112-6332

CAP Cadet Protection Policies

The objective of the cadet program of the CAP is to develop citizenship and leadership skills through aviation-related activities. The health, welfare, and safety of CAP cadets are our primary concerns as we achieve this goal. The following policies have been adapted specifically to protect cadets from abuse:

- **Screening** - All CAP senior members undergo a FBI criminal history record check to determine eligibility for CAP membership. National Headquarters CAP/DP coordinates this record check with the FBI.
- **Training** - Prior to working with cadets, senior members must complete CAP's Cadet Protection Training Program.
- **Leadership** - All cadet activities must be supervised properly. Commanders must exercise care in selecting senior members and cadets to conduct and supervise cadet activities. Generally, this means that a minimum of two senior members will be present when appropriate and feasible. This requirement also protects senior members from false allegations of abuse.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Cadets will not be subjected to sexual molestation, touching, contact, exposure, suggestions or other incidents of a sexually-oriented nature.
- **Physical Abuse** - Cadets will not be physically struck or assaulted in any way. Also, cadets will not be hazed or forced to do excessive exercises.
- **Reporting Requirements** - Senior members, cadets, cadet parents/guardians should report suspected abuse to the unit commander or the commander at the next higher level of command. The unit commander reports the allegation to his or her wing commander; the wing commander then contacts the wing legal officer and National Headquarters CAP Corporate Legal Counsel or Executive Director. CAP views allegations of abuse as serious and will fulfill its statutory obligation to contact appropriate child protection and law enforcement agencies for investigation and prosecution of child abuse allegations.



Parental Roles and Responsibilities

The CAP relies upon active parental participation to assist with protection of CAP cadets in areas of child abuse and drug abuse. To foster this participation, the CAP encourages:

- Parents' meetings to discuss the CAP program.
- Parents' committees to advise CAP units on cadet activities.
- Requiring parental permission for each activity outside of regular squadron meetings.
- Parents to meet unit commanders and senior members.
- Routine communications with parents including a calendar of events that keep parents informed about planned activities and notifying parents when the schedule of activities changes.

The Civil Air Patrol invites you to consider sharing your child's CAP experience and to participate in meaningful community service by becoming a Civil Air Patrol senior member.

We urge you to take an active interest in your child's CAP experience. When you have questions, feel free to contact officers at the unit, wing, or at National Headquarters, CAP.



Protecting Your Child from Sexual Abuse and Drug Abuse

Being the parent of an adolescent is a demanding responsibility made all the more difficult by the pervasive influences of alcohol, drugs and risks of sexual abuse or sexual assault. Parents, however, have a great deal of power to help their children develop defenses against these influences.

- ***Talk with your children about sexual abuse.*** Even teenagers need to understand that sexual abuse can happen to them and that individuals who present the biggest risk of sexual abuse are not strangers.
- ***Pose some “What if...” scenarios to help your child develop appropriate resistance strategies.*** During discussions with your children, ask them what they would do if a particular incident occurred. Your hypothetical cases should include situations in which both adults and young people are the aggressors. For example, you might want to discuss “date rape” situations.
- ***Reassure your child that, whatever happens in an abusive situation, the aggressor is responsible--victims should not and will not be blamed.*** Often sexually abused or sexually assaulted children do not turn to their parents for help because they fear they will be blamed for being victimized. Addressing these concerns before anything happens may create an atmosphere in which your child is more likely to seek your help.
- ***Be alert to changes in your child’s behavior and feelings about particular people.*** Many children exhibit changes in behavior after an incident in which they were sexually victimized, or even when it was only an attempt at victimization. Common reactions to sexual abuse include sudden changes in school performance, depression for more than a normal period of time, or sleep disturbances. In addition, they may have a sudden unexplained change in their relationship with the perpetrator--avoiding any contact with him or her.
- ***Be alert to physical signs that your child may have been sexually abused.*** In many cases, there are physical indications that a child has been molested. Examples of such signs are: torn, stained, or bloody underwear, pain or itching in the genital area, bruised or bleeding external genitalia, sexually transmitted diseases, and pregnancy. In older children who may be sexually active, the interpretation of some of these signs as indicators of possible sexual abuse is less certain than if the signs were present in younger children.
- ***Be aware that young people are exposed to drugs early in life.*** Unfortunately, the use of illegal drugs - especially by our young people - continues to be a great problem for this nation. One study concluded that the average age when boys first experiment with drugs was 11 years of age. For girls, the average age was slightly older, 13 years old.
- ***Know the serious consequences of drug abuse.*** The abuse of drugs creates a myriad of short- and long-term physical and psychological health effects which have been well documented. Some physical effects are heart, lung, and kidney damage, and brain damage. Other changes include memory loss, the inability to concentrate, depression, and other psychological effects. Many of these changes are permanent.
- ***Help your children set realistic goals for their futures and relate how drugs would interfere with reaching those goals.*** Most young people are exposed to the facts about drug abuse in various drug abuse education programs. They know about the damages drugs can inflict physically. They may not, however, associate drug abuse with the long-term impact it can have on their own life-goals.

- ***Be a good example for your children.*** Children are quick to ignore “do as I say, not as I do,” adults. If you do not want your children to drive after using alcohol, your example will be the standard they use. If you do not want them to use drugs, your attitude about drugs and your past (or current) usage of them will be the benchmark used by your children.
- ***Encourage your children to participate in activities that encourage a healthy lifestyle and that develop self-esteem.*** CAP, organized sports, church youth groups, and extracurricular activities at school are examples of activities that provide opportunities for personal development. Parental guidance and encouragement of active participation in such activities can help your children avoid the temptation to experiment with drugs.
- ***Help enforce CAP’s drug abuse policy.*** CAP has a “zero tolerance” drug abuse policy. CAP members are forbidden from possessing or consuming illegal drugs. Also, CAP cadets may not possess or consume alcohol during any CAP activity, regardless of age. CAP senior members may not consume alcohol while participating in any cadet activity.



Communicating With Teenagers

Parents are often at a loss to know how to communicate with their teenagers or how to know if what they are saying makes any difference. Teenagers’ drive for independence may cause conflict between them and their parents. Some conflict is normal, but may be problematic for both. Adolescents are in the final stage of childhood and successful parenting requires allowing teens to begin to make decisions about some aspects of their lives such as clothing and hair styles while setting boundaries in high risk areas such as curfews, drinking, and school attendance.

Many teenagers complain that the only time their parents talk to them is to lecture them about something they did wrong. Parents need to discipline their children, but they should also strive to find opportunities to praise their children and to express interest in their childrens’ activities, friends, schoolwork and, of course, their CAP experiences.

Communications with teenage children may be facilitated by use of open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Such questions usually begin with phrases such as:

- “How do you feel about...?”
- “What do you think of...?”
- “How did it go...?”

By involvement in the routine day-to-day activities of your children, you are more likely to notice the clues that something is wrong and be better able to offer your assistance.



National Resources

For additional information concerning protecting your child from child abuse or drug abuse contact the following clearinghouses:

Child Abuse and Neglect Information Clearinghouse
PO Box 1182
Washington DC 20013
(800) FYI-3366
<http://www.calib.com/nccanch>

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children
2101 Wilson Blvd, Suite 550
Arlington VA 22201
(703) 235-3900
<http://www.missingkids.org>

National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse
332 South Michigan Ave, Suite. 1600
Chicago IL 60604-4357
(312) 663-3520
<http://www.childabuse.org>

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Information
PO Box 2345
Rockville MD 20847-2345
(301)468-2600
<http://www.health.org>